

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PHNOM 00123 021346Z

50

ACTION EA-10

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O P 021225Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8779

INFO CINCPAC HONOLULU HI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 123

E.O. GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CB

SUBJECT: SECOND DAY OF KC DRY SEASON OFFENSIVE

REF: PHNOM PENH 016

1. ACTIVITY CONTINUED HIGH WITH SOME MINOR SHIFTS IN EMPHASIS DURING THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 1/2 AND THE DAY OF THE 2ND, AND WAS STILL CONFINED TO THE PHNOM PENH AREA AND THE MEKONG BANKS SOUTH OF THE CITY.

2. ENEMY PRESSURE CONTINUED STRONG ON THE 7TH DIVISION AREA NORTHWEST OF THE CITY, AND THAT DIVISION FAILED TO COMPLETE A PROJECTED LINKUP ALONG THE ROAD BETWEEN THE DIVISION CP AREA EASTWARDS TO THE TONLE SAP RIVER, THOUGH THERE WAS NO APPARENT ENEMY PENETRATION TO THE SOUTH OF THIS LINE. THE POL STORAGE FARM REMAINED WITHIN MOTOR DISTANCE

AND TWO TANKER TRUCKS WERE HIT AND BURNED. TO THE NORTHEAST ALONG HIGHWAY 61, BRIDGES 3 THROUGH 8 OF THE 13 BETWEEN MOUK KAMPOUL AND THE CITY WERE IN ENEMY HANDS, WHEREAS BRIDGE 9 WAS HELD BY A VERY SMALL

FANK UNIT, AS WERE THE REMAINING ONES. NEITHER ENEMY NOR FRIENDLY FORCES IN THE AREA WERE CONSIDERED VERY LARGE.

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PAGE 02 PHNOM 00123 021346Z

3. FIGHTING CONTINUED ON THE EAST BANK THROUGHOUT THE DAY WITH THE TWO PARATROOP BATTALIONS WHO WERE FERRIED OVER YESTERDAY RELIEVING THE BESIEGED 84TH BRIGADE HEADQUARTERS AND GENERALLY HELPING TO REDUCE ENEMY-HELD AREAS TO SMALL POCKETS WHICH WERE, HOWEVER, RESISTING STRONGLY. NO ROCKETS HAD FALLEN ON THE CITY SINCE 1850 LOCAL THE NIGHT

OF JAN. 1. IT IS PROBABLE THAT ENEMY STRENGTH ON THIS PORTION OF THE EAST BANK MAY NOT BE OVER THREE BATTALIONS, AND PROSPECTS FOR STABILIZING THIS AREA VERY QUICKLY SEEM GOOD.

4. THE 3 TO 4 KILOMETER STRETCH OF HIGHWAY 1 IN THE SECTOR OF THE 36TH BRIGADE WHICH THE ENEMY HAD HELD YESTERDAY HAS BEEN EXPANDED SOUTHWARD TO PERHAPS AS MUCH AS 6 KILOMETERS, AND PROSPECTS FOR CLOSING THIS CUT IN THE NEAR FUTURE DO NOT APPEAR GOOD. THE FIRE BASE OF DEI DOH ON THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG RIVER OPPOSITE THE CUT ON HIGHWAY (1) HAS NOT YET COME UNDER SERIOUS ENEMY ATTACK, BUT THIS SEEMS LIKELY SOON.

5. WHILE THE NEAK LUONG-BANAM AREA FARTHER SOUTH ON THE EAST BANK OF THE MEKONG REMAINED FAIRLY QUIET, A HEAVY ENEMY ATTACK ON THE NAVAL MARINE UNITS BASED AT PEAM CHOR RESULTED IN A LOSS OF 2 OF 3 POSITIONS

ON THE EAST BANK, WITH THE FATE OF 130 OF AN ORIGINAL 300 MAN FORCE UNKNOWN AT THIS TIME. AT THE END OF THE DAY 30 MARINES WERE STILL HOLDING THEIR EAST BANK POSITION. MANY OF THE REST HAD ESCAPED TO A FRIENDLY POSITION ON AN ISLAND IN THE RIVER OPPOSITE THEIR POSITION.

6. THERE WAS HEAVY FIGHTING TODAY SOUTHWEST OF THE CITY IN THE ANG SNOUL REGION ALONG ROUTE 4 IN THE SECTOR OF THE 3RD FANK DIVISION.

BY THE END OF THE DAY ROUTE 4 WAS CLEAR EXCEPT FOR A SMALL AREA AROUND ANG SNOUL MARKET WHICH SHOULD BE CLEARED UP IN THE MORNING. FURTHERMORE, THE 3RD DIVISION AREA SOUTH OF THE HIGHWAY APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN CLEARED UP WITH HEAVY ENEMY CASUALTIES. A MAJOR PREOCCUPATION

CONTINUED TO BE THE AREA WEST OF THE CITY AND NORTH OF ROUTE 4, INCLUDING TUOL LEAP, WHICH COULD PROVIDE A NATURAL AVENUE OF APPROACH

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PAGE 03 PHNOM 00123 021346Z

TOWARDS THE AIRPORT AND THE IMPORTANT AMMUNITION STORAGE CENTER ADJACENT. PLANS ARE UNDERWAY TO REINFORCE THIS AREA WITH 2 BATTALIONS OF THE 5TH

BRIGADE FLOWN DOWN FROM KOMPONG CHNNANG IN THE LATE AFTERNOON, PLUS ADDITIONAL ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS. ADDITIONAL REINFORCEMENTS ARE TO BE BROUGHT DOWN FROM KOMPONG CHNNANG BY NAVAL CONVOY IN THE NEXT DAY OR SO, INCLUDING THE REMAINING TWO BATTALIONS OF THE 5TH BRIGADE.

7. WHILE THE OUDONG-LOVEK AREA ITSELF REMAINED FAIRLY QUIET, THE ENEMY CONTINUED TO OCCUPY A SEVERAL KILOMETER STRETCH OF HIGHWAY 5 NORTH OF THE POL TANK FARM IN THE DIRECTION OF LOVEK.

8. AIR AND NAVAL SUPPORT HAS REMAINED EXCELLENT THROUGHOUT THE DAY.

9. IT REMAINS TOO EARLY TO HAVE A CLEAR PICTURE EITHER OF EVENTUAL ENEMY INTENTIONS AND DIRECTIONS OF PRINCIPAL EFFORT, AS WELL AS OF CASUALTY LEVELS ON BOTH SIDES.

10. REFUGEE REPORT. THE ENEMY ATTACKS IN THE PHNOM PENH AREA HAVE FORCED OVER 10,000 PEOPLE TO BECOME REFUGEES. MANY OF THESE PEOPLE HAVE ONLY RECENTLY BEEN RESETTLED AND ARE REFUGEES FOR THE SECOND OR THIRD TIME. ALL REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROJECTS IN THE NORTHERN DIKE AREA AND ALONG ROUTE 5 NORTH OF PHNOM PENH HAVE BEEN ABANDONED FOR THE TIME BEING. THE RECENTLY INAUGURATED PROJECTS AIMED AT DRY SEASON RICE CULTIVATION NORTH OF PHNOM PENH UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE RESETTLEMENT DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION HAVE ALSO BEEN ABANDONED. THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, WORKING WITH THE MINISTRY OF REFUGEES AND USAID/KHMER REPUBLIC, ANTICIPATE THAT THE RELIEF ASPECTS OF THIS NEW INFLUX OF REFUGEES CAN BE HANDLED AND THEY ARE PREPARING TO BEGIN WHATEVER RELIEF DISTRIBUTIONS MAY BE NECESSARY. STABILIZATION OF THE MILITARY SITUATION WOULD PERMIT RETURN TO FARM AND RESETTLEMENT AREAS, BUT THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE RECENT ENEMY ATTACKS IN THE SAME AREAS AS LAST YEAR MAY BE AN INHIBITING FACTOR. THE DRY SEASON CULTIVATION PROGRAM PARTICULARLY HAS BEEN SET BACK, AS TIME IS IMPORTANT FOR ITS SUCCESS.
DEAN

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